

## *Unit 2*

# **The Church**

### **6. The Church Is God's People**

Why do we say the Church is God's People?

### **7. The Church Building Helps Us "See" the Church**

What helps us "see" the Church in our church building?

### **8. The Liturgy Enables Us to "Be" the Church**

How does the Liturgy help us "be" the Church?

### **9. Marriage Helps Us Understand the Church**

How does a loving relationship between a husband and a wife help us understand the Church?

### **10. The Church is Christ's Body**

How does the Church Live as Christ's Body?

### **11. I Am Part of This Body**

What are some ways that show I am part of Christ's Body?

## Supplementary Activities

The following are suggested activities to help students focus on the information in the lesson:

1. Write the lesson's question on the board or on a poster board. After sections of the lesson are read, go back to the question and write answers. This supplementary activity is explained on the third page of each lesson plan.
2. This next activity could be done as a class or individual project. At the beginning of each lesson, distribute note cards. Have the students write the words from the "Let us remember ..." section in the student text on one side and the definition on the other side. Use these cards for review throughout the year.
3. At the beginning of each lesson, ask the students to draw a picture of what they think they will learn in the lesson. Tell them they are making the front cover page for each lesson. Discuss some of these pictures at the beginning and/or at the end of the lesson. At the end of the unit, display these pictures on poster boards or on a bulletin board. (This activity could be done at the end of the lesson instead of the beginning.)

### Planning Ahead for "Today's Witnesses to Christ"

Invite by phone or by written invitation (see the last page of Lesson 6) the following Church members to be interviewed for the lesson. Tell them the date and the time—ten minutes planned at the beginning or the end of the class—and identify the questions that will be asked. Catechists, add your name and phone number to the letter, and call your guests the week before the interview to finalize the plan.

6. The Church Is God's People—Your priest
7. The Church Building Helps Us "See" the Church—Any active Church member (Also arrange to be able to go into the church for this lesson.)
8. The Liturgy Enables Us to "Be" the Church—The deacon and/or cantor
9. Marriage Helps Us Understand the Church—A married couple
10. The Church Is Christ's Body—Parishioner who serves the Church regularly such as an altar server, catechist, reader, custodian, secretary
11. I Am Part of This Body—Grade 5 catechist and Grade 5 students

### ***Objectives***

By the end of this lesson, the students should be able to

- define the Church as the people of God who follow Jesus as their Lord.
- identify the Church as God's people who come together to help each other.
- recognize the people in their own parish as the Church, God's people.
- state that the Apostles followed Jesus' words "to go and make disciples of all nations."
- realize that all Christians work together to build up the Kingdom of God.

### ***For the Catechist***

People are often accustomed to think of Church as a building where they worship. Others think of it as a structured organization in which they are some insignificant part. For a complete understanding of Church, we turn to both biblical and traditional teaching. The Church is a living entity: not an object but people joined in relationship with one another in the Holy Spirit.

As Church we form a pilgrimage that is directed to building up the Kingdom of God. The Second Vatican Council identifies our unity: "It has pleased God to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness . . ."

"God has gathered together as one all those who in faith look upon Jesus as the author of salvation and the source of unity and peace, and has established them as the Church . . ." (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, #9-10).

The early followers of Jesus joined together in the Church. As the Body of Christ, they worked to "make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19). Today we are called upon to do the same. In the Grade 3 book, *God Calls Us Together*, the emphasis is on the Church as the coming together of God's people to worship God and to serve others. In this year's book, *We Are God's People*, the emphasis is on God's people joining together on their journey in building up the Kingdom of God.

### ***Materials Needed***

**Opening and Closing Prayers:** New Testament, prayer page

**Review:** Paper, pens, or pencils

**Introduction:** Magazine pictures of people helping other people

**The Message:** New Testament, pens or pencils, note cards, map or globe

**Application:** Pens or pencils, pictures of church members and activities

### ***Icons and Pictures***

*Icon Packet 2:* The Great Commissioning

### **For Next Week's Lesson**

Arrange to be able to go into your church. Also, invite a parishioner to the class for the interview. (Instructions on page 128)

# Connections

## 1. Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

*Materials:* New Testament

Invite the class to stand by the icon and remain silent for a few seconds before making the sign of the cross.

Have the students read aloud together:

- Reading (Matthew 28:16-20) [Remind the students that just as Jesus tells the disciples to go out and call all people to His teachings, He is talking to us too.]

## 2. Review (*Fruit of the Holy Spirit*) (5 minutes)

*Materials:* Paper, pens or pencils

Help the students recall the details they learned last week about the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Write the first letter of each word. Have the students complete the words—let them use their last lesson to find the answers. (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control)

*Alternate:* Have the students work together in groups to create a scene that shows people demonstrating the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

## 3. Introduction (3 minutes)

*Materials:* Magazine pictures that show young people together having fun (at the movies, at the mall, playing a sport)

Show pictures of people having fun. Ask: *What is happening in the picture? Do you like to get together with other people? Why?*

Connect this idea about the importance of being with other people to the importance of people coming together to worship as the Church.

### Notes for the lesson:

(Use this space to write helpful hints to use each year)

# The Message

## 4. The Good News (3 minutes)

Have the students read aloud or silently the first two paragraphs.

*Discuss: Do you think you would have listened to the Apostles? Why?*

## 5. The Church (10 minutes)

a) Read the next paragraph aloud or silently. Read the Psalm aloud as a group

*Discuss: Did you ever see anyone excited about being in church? [Remind the students that the people are the Church.]*

### Supplementary Activity:

(Activity 1 on the back of the unit page) Write the question for this lesson on the board or on a poster board: *Why do we say the Church is God's People?* Write the following answers when you find them in the text.

1. The Church is the followers of Jesus Christ, the Christians.
2. The Church is God's people taking care of each other.
3. The Apostles baptized people in all nations and these people became the Church in those nations.

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## The Church Is God's People

Why do we say the Church is God's People?



**The Good News**  
In the Acts of the Apostles, we learn about the early followers of Jesus Christ. We read how they shared their stories about Jesus and told other people the Good News. They wanted people to know that through Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, we are united to God forever. This news is good because now we can live forever in the Kingdom of God!

**The Church**  
In the Old Testament we do not find the word church, but we read about people coming together to worship God and offer sacrifices. The Israelites gathered in the temple and synagogues. In the Book of Psalms is a scriptural passage that shows the excitement of the Israelites as they prepared to praise God in the temple in Jerusalem and honor their relationship with Him:

People started to follow the Apostles. They wanted to hear more about Jesus and learn how to live this new life. These people wanted to become Christians, the name given in Antioch to followers of Jesus Christ. After these people heard about Christ, they wanted to be baptized and become members of the Church.

"How lovely your dwelling,  
O Lord of hosts!  
My soul yearns and pines  
for the courts of the Lord"  
(Psalms 84:2-3)

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### Background Reading:

(The Church)

"The very word *Church* literally means a gathering, a term that goes back to the days of the Jewish experience in the desert and which points to the first essential element in the Church's nature. There Moses gathered the Jews into an assembly (*qahal*), beginning the process that made of them a nation. It was in this regular coming together that the Jews received and realized their identity as the chosen people of God. Called together from their various tribes into the gathering of Israel, they became what God wanted them to be—a people one in His name.

"The Church has a similar experience. As the new people of God, it too has been called together—not simply from a few related tribes—but from the entire world, to be a people. And, as in the Old Testament, it is when the Church gathers, especially in the Eucharistic assembly, that its identity as a holy nation is realized. This is why the followers of Christ are called Church, which means 'those who have been gathered.'

"Christians, then, are (before anything else) members of a community, an assembly, and it is only within the context of the group that we can claim the name Christian. The old adage, 'the solitary Christian is no Christian' holds true: we are Christians because we are members of the Christian people" (*WEF* 66-67).

## 5. The Church

*continued*

**b)** Ask the students what they think about when they hear the word church. Then have them read the first three paragraphs. Ask: *Explain what it means when we say the Church is God's people.*

**c)** Read the remaining paragraphs and the Scripture. Ask:

- *What about the Christian's lifestyle made other people want to join the Church?*
- *Is there anything that you do as a Christian that would make people want to join the Church?*

(Receive Communion; feel happy and peaceful; have a place to go to ask for help)

## 6. The Mysteries of Initiation

( 5 minutes)

Divide the class into three groups. Have each group read one paragraph. Come together and have each group explain the main idea of their paragraph.

- *What is our baptismal promise?* (To grow in our relationship with God)
- *What are some ways we can do that?* (Pray; read the Bible; help other people)

### Background Reading:

(The Body of Christ)

"We can imagine that the first believers, such a tiny minority in an overwhelmingly pagan society, depended strongly on one another. The apostles insisted, however, that these new Christians realize that their community was not based on simple human dynamics. They were a community because of the work of the Holy Spirit dwelling in their midst:

'Are you not aware that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, and you are that temple.' (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

"For the Jews, the temple at Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God. Now, says St. Paul, it is the Church, the Body of Christ, rather than a physical location which is the new temple, because the Spirit dwells in it. And so the Church is not simply a gathering of like-minded individuals. God is present within it—it is more than human. God's indwelling presence marks the Church out from no other religious body, even that of Christ's disciples before Pentecost. He who consented to take the form of a servant now dwells in an even weaker vessel, defying all logic or human thought" (WEF 68-69).

In the Gospel of Matthew we hear Jesus use the word church:  
"And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."  
(Matthew 16:18)

In the Acts of the Apostles we also read the word church:  
"And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things."  
(Acts 5:11)

In both passages the word church is referring to more than a building, it is referring to the people. That means when we talk about the Church, we also are talking about God's people who follow Jesus as their Lord. These Church members are called Christians because they believe in Jesus Christ and have been baptized.

Let's read how the early Christians lived. Turn to Acts 4:32 to complete the following: "The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common."

Read verses 33-35 to learn more about the way the early Christians were living.

These early Christians were living the way Jesus had lived. They showed their love for everyone as they worked together to build up the Kingdom of God. Their example helped other people choose to become Christian.

**The Mysteries of Initiation**  
We, too, are members of this same Church that we read about in the New Testament. We became members of the Church through the Mysteries of Initiation. At our Baptism we "put on Christ" and at our Chrismation we received the gift of the Holy Spirit. We became one with all other Christians who received the Mystery of Baptism and the Mystery of Chrismation.

After we had been baptized and chrismated, we received the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist. We received the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and became one with God and each other. The Mysteries of Initiation are the beginning of our new life as we join all other Christians in building up the Kingdom of God.

Just as the early Christians lived in a way that showed they were followers of Jesus Christ, we are asked to do the same. At our Baptism, we "put on Christ" and promised to grow in our relationship with God. This is called our baptismal promise. As Christians and members of the Church, we ask the Holy Spirit to help all of us grow closer to God and to each other.

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## 8. Let us remember that...

(5 minutes)

a) Have the students read the first paragraph.

b) Use a map or a globe for the next paragraphs in both sections. Have one student read the name and place and another one find the place on a map or globe.

## 9. Let us remember that...

(1 minute)

Have the students read these two paragraphs about other people chosen in addition to the Twelve Apostles.

### Supplementary Activity:

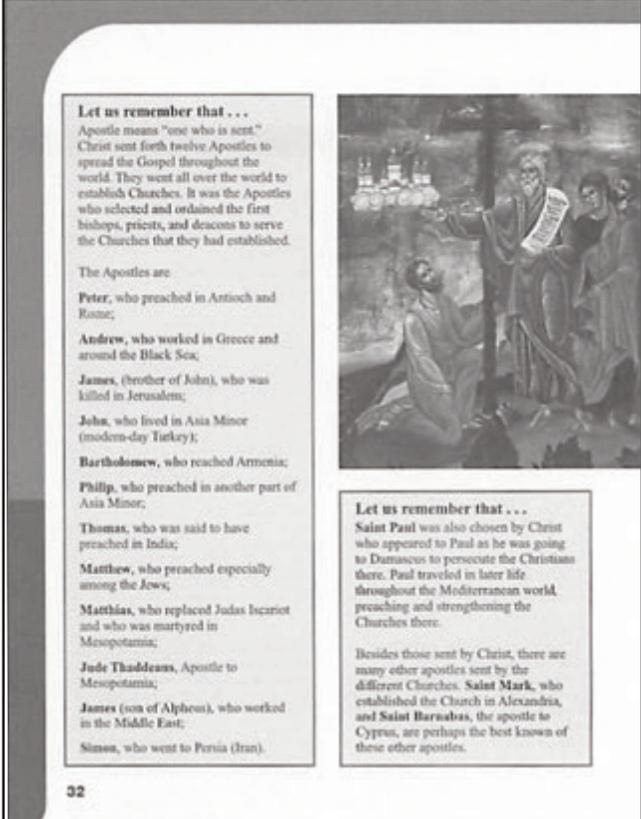
(Activity 2 on the back of the unit page) Have the students make note cards to be used for review.

Write a note card for each person mentioned in both sections and include information about where he went to preach.

### Background Reading:

(Authority and Holiness)

"One of the gifts which the Church receives from the Spirit is the charism of authority. Our English words 'author' and 'authority' come from the Latin *auctor* and *auctoritas*. They refer to the quality of being an author: to develop, to make decisions, to increase. Jesus the Lord remains the Church's true authority, because He alone is the author of our salvation. However He gave the apostles a share in His authority, which was to be accepted as His own (cf Lk 10:16). As the eyewitnesses of His resurrection, the apostles transmitted from personal knowledge the message of Jesus. They were the first preachers of Christ's Gospel and retain a special place in the Church for all time. Their mission was beautifully described in 1 Jn 1:1, noted above. The authoritative role exercised by the apostles is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters written by them, especially by St. Paul. Among the apostles St. Peter had a special role as seen by his intervention at the Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:7-12)" (LLI 90).



**Let us remember that . . .**  
Apostle means "one who is sent." Christ sent forth twelve Apostles to spread the Gospel throughout the world. They went all over the world to establish Churches. It was the Apostles who selected and ordained the first bishops, priests, and deacons to serve the Churches that they had established.

The Apostles are:

- Peter**, who preached in Antioch and Rome;
- Andrew**, who worked in Greece and around the Black Sea;
- James**, (brother of John), who was killed in Jerusalem;
- John**, who lived in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey);
- Bartholomew**, who reached Armenia;
- Philip**, who preached in another part of Asia Minor;
- Thomas**, who was said to have preached in India;
- Matthew**, who preached especially among the Jews;
- Matthias**, who replaced Judas Iscariot and who was martyred in Mesopotamia;
- Jude Thaddeus**, Apostle to Mesopotamia;
- James** (son of Alphaeus), who worked in the Middle East;
- Simon**, who went to Persia (Iran).



**Let us remember that . . .**  
Saint Paul was also chosen by Christ who appeared to Paul as he was going to Damascus to persecute the Christians there. Paul traveled in later life throughout the Mediterranean world, preaching and strengthening the Churches there.

Besides those sent by Christ, there are many other apostles sent by the different Churches. Saint Mark, who established the Church in Alexandria, and Saint Barnabas, the apostle to Cyprus, are perhaps the best known of these other apostles.

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# Application

## 10. Today's Witnesses to Christ

(10 minutes)

For the lessons in this unit about the Church being the people, have the students learn more about the people in their own parish. Because each parish is unique, use your own judgment as to who should be interviewed.

The catechist should contact the person in advance and give him or her the list of questions that will be asked. Also, inform them of the time they should be there. [A 10-minute interview session at the end of class would work well with the lesson plan, but you need to adjust the time accordingly.]

All the students should be prepared to take notes on the day of the interview, but have only one student ask the questions. Have a different student for each class session. At the end of the interview, that person thanks the guest and all students sing "God grant you many years."

Also, use one of the following ways to thank your guest:

1. Have one student write a thank-you note and everyone signs it.
2. Buy a thank-you note and have the students sign it.

If the interview is at the beginning of class, have the students complete the "What do you think?" section immediately.

If the interview is at the end, ask the students to complete this section at home. Encourage them to share their answers with their parents.

### Optional Activity 1

Interview another priest in your area. (Or someone may have a relative who is a priest and is willing to answer the questions.)

### Optional Activity 2

Take a picture of the person and place it onto the copy (found at the end of this lesson) of the question and answer sheet. Have the students share the way they wrote their answers and decide on the best ones to use. Have someone with good printing skills print the answers. Place this page into a three-ring binder or a folder with clasps.

Ask the students for suggestions for the title for the booklet. At the end of the year, add this booklet to your library in the room—or even the church library.

*Today's Witnesses to Christ*

**Our Priest**  
The members of our Church family are witnesses to Christ because they have the courage to follow God's ways. They take time to grow closer to God even though there are so many other activities that want to take them away from God.

For the next few weeks, you will interview different church members who have been invited to share their story. After you listen to them answer the following questions, write a brief summary of their answer and notice all the different ways we are God's people.

Welcome your priest as the first person to tell his story about being a member of the Church.

Welcome, Father \_\_\_\_\_

When and where were you baptized?  
\_\_\_\_\_

When did you become a priest?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any stories you would like to share with us as to how you knew you wanted to be a priest?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite part of your ministry as a priest?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Use this space to write any other questions you want to ask or to take notes.)

What is the hardest part of your ministry as a priest?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think?**  
(Answer these questions after the interview.)

1. What surprised you about the way Father decided to become a priest?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What part of being a priest or a member of a religious community would be the most meaningful?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Would you want to become a priest or a nun? Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 11. Action Plan

(3 minutes)

Have the students work alone or in groups as they complete this page. Help them think about the people in the parish being members of God's family and about the events being important in their lives. This activity will help them call to action their need to be part of these events and these people's lives.

[If you have any pictures from church activities, bring them in to show the class. Suggest that they ask their parents if they have any pictures that they can bring in next week to share.]

## 12. Summary

(3 minutes)

Forming two teams, use the "Jeopardy!" or another popular quiz program format to summarize the points of the lesson: Use questions such as the following:

- The Church. (What are the people of God called?)
- Christians (Who are the followers of Jesus?)
- Mysteries of Initiation (What are the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and Holy Eucharist called?)
- Apostles (What is the word that means "one who is sent"?)
- "Go and make disciples of all nations." (What did Jesus tell the Apostles to do?)

## 12. Closing Prayer

(2 Minutes)

Ask the students to remain silent for a short time as they think about thanking God for the members of their parish. Then pray the Lord's Prayer

Action Plan

**We Are God's People**

We keep picture albums of important events and people. Today we are going to make a picture album of important events and people in our church. Because you might not have the pictures to use, write in the circles and blocks the people you would have in the picture and/or the event that it shows. Remember you are making an album that shows your church in action. (If you have any pictures that you can bring in next week, please tape them to this page at the beginning of the next class.)

<i>picture of your church during the celebration of the Nativity of Christ</i>	<i>picture of your priest</i>	<i>picture of the cantor</i>
<i>picture of the religious education classes</i>	<i>picture of a festival or picnic</i>	<i>picture of a Baptism</i>
		<i>picture of your family in church</i>

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### For Next Week's Lesson:

**Arrange to be able to go into the church.**

**Also, invite a parishioner to the class for the interview. Instructions are on the back of the unit page and a sample invitation letter is at the end of this lesson.**

Dear Father,

For the next few weeks, we will be learning about the members of our Church. Part of the lesson asks us to interview members of our Church family. We would like to invite you to be the first one to visit our class.

We hope you are able to visit with us on \_\_\_\_\_.  
We would like to ask you the following questions:

- When and where were you baptized?
- When did you become a priest?
- Do you have any stories you would like to share with us as to how you knew you wanted to be a priest?
- What is your favorite part of your ministry as a priest?
- What is the hardest part of your ministry as a priest?

This interview should take about ten minutes. We would like to do the interview at the beginning or at the end of the class—whatever is most convenient for you.

We hope you are able to join us.

Sincerely,  
Grade 5 Students and Catechist